

unacast.

From Science to Data Science: Moving from Academia to Industry

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WiDS, 16 April 2020

Myself



Data Scientist

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Unacast

5 years from  till 

2012 PhD in Cognitive Psychology @ University of Hong Kong  

2015 Learned about Data Science from a friend 

2016 Internship @ startup in Hong Kong (last 6 months of PhD)  

2017 3-year Postdoc @ University of Oslo  

2020 Data Scientist @ Unacast   

3 STEPS

REFLECT

DECIDE

ACT ASAP
&
FOLLOW
THROUGH
100%

“... to find a Data Scientist job is **just a matter of**  ”

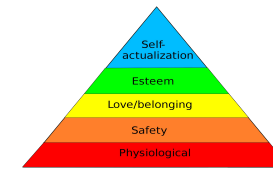
Anneline Huck,
Data Scientist



Benjamin Thürer
Data Scientist

Step 1: Reflect

(I used Maslow's pyramid of human needs)



Physiological



😱 Publish or perish → constant stress

😱 Sleep problems

😱 Depression, anxiety

Safety



😱 Temporary contracts

😱 Very limited job market

Belonging / Love



😄 Cool colleagues

😄 International environment

😱 Risk to lose friends

😱 Family planning can be tricky

Recognition



😄 Conferences

😄 Published papers

😱 Revise & Resubmit

😱 Advanced degree, highly skilled → difficulties with finding a job

Self Actualisation



😄 Research / science

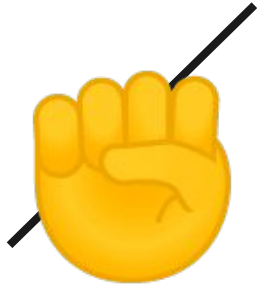
😄 Academic freedom

😱 Narrow professional circle

😱 Living in the Ivory Tower

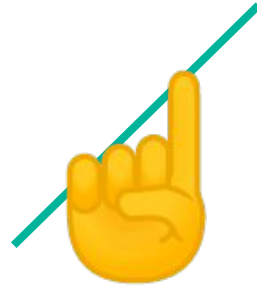
😱 Professorship = administrative work, no time for research

Step 2: Decide on...



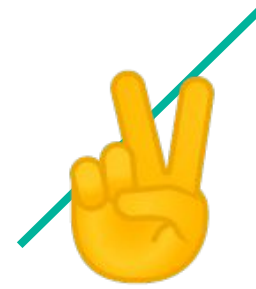
Be a Data Scientist

- communicate it to yourself
- communicate it to others



What **data** to work with

- personal interests
- domain knowledge



What **environment** to work in

- startup?
- big corporation?

Step 3: Act ASAP & follow through 100%



Benjamin Thürer
Data Scientist



Science

Data Science

Act **ASAP** & follow through **100%**

Why ASAP?

WORK EXPERIENCE

- Strong interdependence
- Shared responsibilities
- Short projects
- Strict deadlines
- Quick decisions
- Immediate impact
- Flexibility

Why 100%?

IT IS THE ONLY WAY

- New identity
- Resources: a lot of time and effort

Invest into:

**Practicing
Data
Science**



**Introducing
yourself
to the
community**



**Job
application
process**



Start practicing Data Science

Learn skills

- Complete **online courses**



- **Attend relevant courses**
@ your University
- Start **teaching**

Learn as much as you can!

Apply skills

- Use **more sophisticated statistical methods** in your papers
- Make your **code and data public**
- Complete **data analysis projects**
- Publish your projects in **GitHub**
- **Kaggle** competitions

Introduce yourself to the community 🤝

Meetups



Volunteering

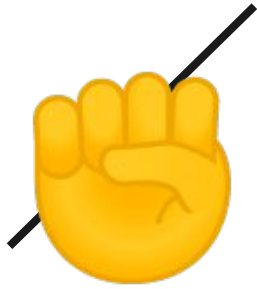


Conferences



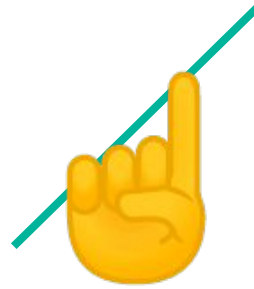
1. **Share your goal to become a Data Scientist with others:** people are interested and they will help.
2. **Learn stories of others.**
3. **Get feedback.**

Job application process



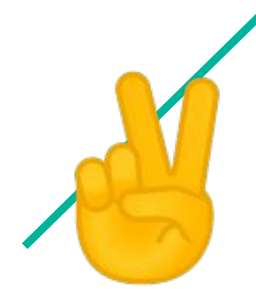
Interviews

- phone interviews with headhunters
- video calls with team members



Screening tests

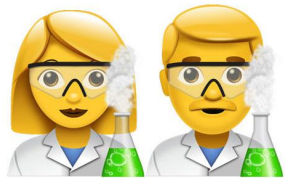
- short programming timed tests (SQL, Python, ...)
- personality tests
- aptitude tests
- take-home data studies



Final interviews

- presenting data studies
- more interviews
- references

You are **officially** a **Scientist!**



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just a matter of ”